

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A layered filter structure, ~~said filter element~~ comprising:
[[-]] a first layer, said first layer comprising a porous metal layer comprising a non-woven metal fiber fleece comprising long metal fibers; and
[[-]] a second layer, said second layer comprising a self-supporting layer of sintered short metal fibers;
said first layer and said second layer being sintered together.
2. (Currently Amended) A layered filter structure according to claim 1, wherein ~~whereby~~ said second layer has a maximum roughness depth defined by an ~~the~~ R_t value of less than three times an ~~the~~ equivalent diameter of a short metal fiber of said second layer, said R_t value being measured over a length equal to a ~~the~~ thickness of said second layer.
3. (Currently Amended) A layered filter structure according to claim 1, wherein ~~whereby~~ said short metal fibers of said second layer are three-dimensionally randomly orientated.
4. (Currently Amended) A layered filter structure according to claim 1, wherein the metal fibers of ~~whereby~~ said first layer are ~~[[is]]~~ sintered before the first and second layers are sintered together.
5. (Canceled).
6. (Currently Amended) A layered filter structure according to claim 1, wherein ~~whereby~~ said first layer further comprises metal powder particles.
7. (Currently Amended) A layered filter structure according to claim 1, wherein ~~whereby~~ said first layer further comprises short metal fibers.
8. (Currently Amended) A layered filter structure according to claim 1, wherein ~~whereby~~ said first layer is supported by a reinforcing structure.

9. (Currently Amended) A layered filter structure according to claim 1, wherein ~~whereby~~ said second layer further comprises long metal fibers and/or metal powder particles.

10. (Currently Amended) A layered filter structure according to claim 1, wherein ~~whereby~~ said second layer comprises between 20 and 80 % short metal fibers and ~~and/or~~ ~~metal powder particles and~~ between 20 and 80 % long metal fibers and/or metal powder particles.

11. (Currently Amended) A layered filter structure according to claim 1, wherein ~~whereby~~ said first layer has a porosity ranging between 50 and 85 %.

12. (Currently Amended) A layered filter structure according to claim 1, wherein ~~whereby~~ said second layer has a porosity ranging between 50 and 85 %.

13. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a layered filter structure, said method comprising the steps of :

providing a first layer, said first layer comprising a porous metal layer;

providing a second layer, said second layer comprising a self-supporting layer of short metal fibers which are sintered together;

bringing said first layer and said second layer in contact with each other to form a layered structure; and

sintering said layered structure.

14. (Currently Amended) A ~~The use of a~~ layered filter structure according to claim 1, wherein the layered filter structure is configured as a surface filtration medium.

15. (Currently Amended) A ~~The use~~ layered filter structure according to claim 14, wherein the layered filter structure is configured for the filtration of liquids or gases.

16. (New) The layered filter structure according to claim 1, wherein the short metal fibers have a length over diameter ratio ranging between 30 and 100, and the long metal fibers have a length over diameter ratio higher than 100.